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SUBJECT: German Views on IRENA and the Innovation Center

REF: State 73217

1. (U) SUMMARY: Germany welcomes the U.S. decision to join the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and is looking forward to assisting in the establishment of both the Secretariat in Abu Dhabi and the Innovation Center in Bonn. Although office space for the Innovation Center has already been identified, Germany believes the establishment of the Innovation Center must follow the establishment of the Secretariat in UAE; therefore Germany will move to set up the Center in tandem with the Secretariat. Germany sees the Innovation Center as a center of excellence that will link renewable international energy expertise and match appropriate technologies with recipients. Germany recognizes that its support for the Innovation Center is separate from, and in addition to, its support for the Secretariat. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) Dr. Urban Rid, Director-General of the German Environment Ministry, outlined Germany's vision for the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in a July 30 meeting with A/DCM Robert Pollard. Rid welcomed the U.S. decision to join IRENA, saying that the organization stands to benefit enormously from U.S. involvement and emphasized U.S. membership as sending an important signal for the future of the organization. Rid noted that although Germany had offered Bonn as host location for the IRENA headquarters, Germany views the choice of Abu Dhabi in a positive light and believes there are some advantages to having the IRENA HQ located in a oil producing region. Rid indicated that Germany is ready to assist in establishing IRENA's UAE HQ and looks to send German experts there to help set up the Secretariat.

German Views on IRENA Innovation Center in Bonn

3. (U) Rid indicated that Germany's establishment of the Innovation Center will go hand in hand with the establishment of the Secretariat in Abu Dhabi and stressed that Germany does not want the development of the Innovation Center to get ahead of the development of the Secretariat. Germany seeks to staff the Innovation Center with international experts. Rid stressed that the

purpose of the Center is to promote and establish cooperation with all IRENA partners and therefore it needed to have an international staff.

¶4. (U) Rid noted that the Innovation Center will not produce research or technology, but rather act as a central coordinator of existing expertise. The Center will work to assess specific regional needs in terms of renewable energies and match these with the most appropriate and promising technologies by sifting through ideas and facilitating discussion. The Center seeks to identify and efficiently steer innovative renewable energy technologies to recipient countries. In this process, the Center will become a reference body for assessing renewable technologies as well as economic, infrastructure (e.g., electric grids) and legal frameworks relevant to the renewable energy field. Rid commented that industrialized countries would also benefit greatly as the Innovation Center will facilitate connections between technology providers and users. Rid also cited the potential for integration between the technology plans that will be developed by IRENA and the technology plans currently being developed in the Major Economies Forum (MEF) process.

¶5. (U) Regarding logistics, Germany intends to establish the Innovation Center in a manner similar to its proposal for hosting the IRENA HQ. Building space has already been identified adjacent to the offices of the Federal Environment Ministry in Bonn. This site, along the Rhine River, is also close to the UNFCCC headquarters and the World Conference Center. Germany understands that its

BERLIN 00000949 002 OF 002

support for the Innovation Center is separate from, and in addition to, Germany's assessed contribution to the IRENA organization. Germany is ready to provide 4 million euros in start-up costs for the Innovation Center plus 2 to 3 million euro annually to support the Center.

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